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# DENES: U.S. BID TO OUST LAOS DEFENSE CHIEF

## Disapprove of Phoumi State Dept. Says

By ROBERT YOUNG  
Times Staff Writer

Washington, May 24 — The state department today denied a report that the United States has demanded removal of Gen. Phoumi Noxavan, the so-called strengthen of Laos' royal government. But official sources disclosed this country has served official notice of disapproval of Phoumi's activities.

The state department also denied another report that the central intelligence agency is trying to set American policy in Laos and is working at cross-purposes with the department and other United States agencies in the Asian country.

President Kennedy met for an hour today with Secretary of State Dean Rusk and key advisers on far eastern problems. The White House described it as strictly a working session.

The activities of Gen. Phoumi, the prime minister of the royal government of Laos, were discussed in Washington last Friday by W. Averell Harriman, assistant secretary of state for far eastern affairs, and his spokesman, T. G. Chapman.

Discussions of Phoumi's activities were limited to official sources and the administration. The CIA, which has been involved in secret operations in Laos, was not mentioned. This was while the CIA chief, John McCone, broke his silence to say he had launched a secret operation

in Laos, giving the Reds a "kick in the pants." He said he had no personal animosity toward Phoumi, who is the military force to support Thailand.

When royal Lao troops retreated from the northern region of Laos, they left behind Phoumi, who had been appointed prime minister by the United States. He had \$1 billion dollars a month to defend himself and his troops.

Harriman also stood to have been informed of the

fact to join the royal, neutral, and communist factions of Laos in forming a coalition government from which the royalists would be international components of the country's independence.

The Harriman Committee, however, officials said, contended that if Phoumi gave up his ambitions to his military duties and was less stubborn regarding negotiations for a coalition government, the royal government would be in a better position to negotiate with the other factions. One of the factors blocking "productive" negotiations has been the royal government's refusal to give up the defense and interior ministries.

David White, state department press officer, said today reports that Harriman demanded Phoumi's removal from the royal government were untrue. White said the state department has strongly urged, however, that the royal Lao government move ahead to negotiate promptly and realistically with the neutral and communist factions to form a government under a coalition government.

The United States did not want Phoumi to be a military dictator, White said. The administration wanted him to be a civilian prime minister, but he refused to give up his military posts.

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